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# THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

## PSYCHOLOGY AND SCIENTIFIC METHODS

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### PSYCHOPHYSICAL PARALLELISM: A PSYCHOLOGICAL EPISODE IN HISTORY

IN the history of philosophy, a history that is, of course, inseparable from that of civilization, the change from dualism as a metaphysics, as a doctrine of two independently existing worlds, the world of spirit and the world of matter, to dualism as only an hypothesis or method, a working standpoint, or say to an epistemological dualism, has, I think, peculiar interest at this time. It is interesting both to psychologists, who in what has been known as psychophysical parallelism long "enjoyed" the hypothesis, and to students of philosophy and the history of civilization, because we seem now to be near to abandoning even the epistemological dualism and in order to understand the recent event, whether as affecting thought or life, we need to recall and examine what has gone before. The medieval dualism, which was metaphysical, the modern parallelism, which has been primarily epistemological, and the recent pragmatic philosophies tell a story, as stories are told in philosophical "isms," that, when understood, has a truly dramatic interest. It is, however, a story that psychology has also found in personal experience, in the individual's consciousness and, while analogies of the development of experience in individual consciousness to centuries-long movements of history must always have their dangers, I think that before we consider the great history of those "isms," medieval dualism, modern parallelism and recent pragmatism, we may with considerable profit take up the story as psychology might tell it.

So, to be more or less psychological for a few paragraphs, we are wont nowadays to look upon words like problem, inquiry, experiment, as indicating a basal character of experience, as descriptive of the impulse or interest underlying all consciousness. In every problem or experiment, furthermore, there is plainly, to speak grammatically, a subject seeking a predicate. Thus: What is that? In this question something, referred to as "that," the grammatical subject, seeks a predicate, as is indicated by the interrogative, "What?" But, so much granted, it is evident that every question,

problem or experiment, simply by its association or expected association of something with some meaning, really involves the matter-spirit, body-mind, real-ideal, or object-subject distinction. One can not ask a question or for that matter even declare anything—a declaration, however positive, being at most only a supposition to be maintained as it were on trial and against recognized opposition and difference—without using and setting, without implying, what in the large way of general philosophy we know as dualism. So is dualism a principle or function of all experience or at least of all questioning or experimenting, and it must have as many applications or structural expressions as there are questions. The great questions, cosmological, psychological, or theological: What is the world? What am I? or What is God?; epistemological, ethical, or teleological; What do I or can I know? What ought I to do? or What may I finally hope for? have always involved their special dualisms, as is shown historically by the conflicting answers, as perennial as the questions themselves, idealistic, on the one hand, and materialistic, on the other, and psychologically by what I venture to believe is true to the personal experience of every one. Does any one, or could any one, put any of those questions without involving the distinction between thing and meaning, fact and value? Materialism and idealism, empiricism and intuitionism, hedonism and rigorism, naturalism or humanism and theism, the first term in each pair referring to the world of things or facts, the second to the world of meanings or values, are more than just “isms” of a sort of general, impersonal history, than just general tendencies or atmospheres of the times, however interesting they are as such incidents of history; they are also actual factors, conflicts and all, of every individual consciousness. Again, they are not merely the affairs of those big questions, but are also, however minutely or inconsequently, involved in every little problem or experiment of any one’s life. When one fully appreciates this, finding in dualism and its whole retinue very general psychological functions as well as historical “isms,” which mark but social and institutional forms of such functions one finds the entire meaning of them all undergoing a radical change from what it has been and perhaps still is in many minds.

But, in addition to each and every question or experiment involving dualism, this is to be said: In each, as its solution develops, experience moves through stages that, as regards the value attached to the dualism, are quite analogous to dualism as metaphysical, dualism as only epistemological, as only a working standpoint for knowledge, and dualism as finally resolved in some action or at least in some pragmatic attitude. Thus, that in the beginning a question, just because it is a question, implies a real divorce of the thing in-

quired about and its meaning or value must be quite obvious. Moreover the two, thing and meaning, just by virtue of their divorce will appear as two existences, being equally real, if the question itself is real, but different in kind and substance. The difference in substance is almost indicated—with apology for any appearance of flippancy on my part—in the colloquial form of question: What in Heaven's name is that? where, as suggested by the emphatic phrase, the inquiry must be very dark and groping indeed and so very dualistic, thing and meaning being as far apart as Heaven and earth and as unlike. In fine, any question—the darker and more groping the better—is a dualism. It is, too, to use the cumbersome word, a metaphysical dualism, in this sense that the inquirer is confronted with a real situation, the essence and being of which lie in the sharp separation of something and its meaning. What—under the sun!—is that thing?

Putting a question, however, is really facing the dual situation which the question implies, and a question squarely put, the situation fairly faced, has advanced a step, an important step, too, although only a first step, towards its solution. With the putting, the inquirer enters upon a process which involves finding himself, such finding constituting the meaning sought—in the thing inquired about or relating all the specific details of the thing, as they are analyzed out, to answering factors discovered in his own nature; and, all in good time, a part-for-part correspondence is worked out between the object in question and the inquiring subject. So, for example, I might be inquisitively interested in a city to which I have come for the first time, and, if duly intelligent and attentive, gradually overcome the metaphysical dualism—much more popularly called embarrassment—that first strikes me, as I get off my train. Gradually, I say, I might overcome my first dualism by finding myself, my various capacities and interests, in the different phases of the city's life or, conversely, the city in the different possibilities of my nature. So, again, as some runner is running across country, the dualism of his surprise, when dashing through a thicket he discovers a difficult stream, is gradually overcome. Analyzing at once the presented circumstances and his own halted or inhibited self, he finally realizes what I now venture to call a condition of psychophysical parallelism between himself, the world of meanings, and the environment, the world of things. The more, too, this parallelism is accomplished, the less metaphysical and the more merely epistemological is the dualism of it, meaning and thing, self and environment, becoming only two aspects of one reality being no longer—save in memory—different and exclusive. Looking before leaping, then, a phrase that might be said at least figuratively to

characterize all serious inquiry, is hardly as simple a matter as commonly supposed. Does it not always involve—could anything be more appalling?—a change from a metaphysical dualism to an epistemological dualism, from some distinction of thing and meaning as a confronted problem to the same distinction, its difference virtually overcome and the animus of it gone, as only formal, as only a way of holding the results of the two correspondent analyses? Can you not imagine the runner, his observations all made, every pertinent detail of the stream and its surroundings carefully related at last to some sensitively felt power of action in himself, as he hesitates before the final action that is to get him across? Surely his first dualism or embarrassment is become only the ghost of its former self, being now metaphysically quite innocent. The divorce of meaning and thing, once so real and immediately existent, is now only apparent and mediate.

But this second stage, the epistemological that follows the metaphysical dualism in the answering of a question or solution of a problem, is, of course, not final. Sooner or later the action, which has been preparing, must ensue. Let the action come, however, and the dualism changes again; being lost altogether, if the action follow without any further question or any need at all of watchful adaptations, but becoming “functional” and “moving,” in so far as constant watching and alertness are necessary or as subsequently some new problem has to be solved. Such a functional and moving dualism is very different from the structural dualism which had preceded and had implied fixity and finality in the terms. In a functional dualism the terms, thing and meaning, environment and self, change in their contents with the progress of the action, making the dualism, as was suggested, “moving,” and, to bring my little excursion into the world of psychology to a close, in the three sorts of dualism, which have now been pointed out, we have the story of a question and its answer, a problem and its solution, fully told. The telling has hardly been in the technical language of psychology, in part because with the present purpose I had to cumber my narrative with philosophical terms, but I must trust that I have said nothing that a psychologist can not recognize.

Now our psychological story is the story also of Christendom: the medieval dualism, the modern psychophysical parallelism, and the present pragmatism, for which dualism can be only functional. Let us, then, turn to the story in this larger writing. Although leaving the ordinary field of psychology, we shall not be leaving that of human experience.

As the ancient civilizations fell, the Roman being the last of them to go, human nature, the human spirit, found itself at last con-

fronted with the sharpest kind of a divorce of things and meaning, world and value. So sharp did it become that men finally retired personally "into themselves" and institutionally into that instrument of separation from the world, the Church, St. Augustine's "City of God." In the Church the inner selves, the souls of men, found independence. But what an empty, formal, meaningless independence it was. No actual advantage, not even life nor liberty of person nor the safe enjoyment of property was involved in it. Moreover, exalting as it did, except for what tradition and memory might conserve from the past, only an abstract, other-worldly spirituality, it was no check at all upon the reign of might. But force and primitive passion could be controlled only in kind. The time, then, was one of souls and brutes, of unearthly spirituality and might, the Bishop of Rome with his Church and the barbarians that overran Italy. Such conditions were, of course, quite consistent and logical. Might and an abstract spirituality may at first seem a strange partnership, but history always has her humors, like politics making strange fellowships; and, as to that partnership, might and unworldliness were, after all, true counterparts of each other, as is shown by the fact that for centuries they were the two mutually supporting powers or sanctions behind the thrones of popes and emperors or kings. Study your history and you will find that, whenever might has made right, God—ruling, it is true, very much from on high—has also been claimed as might's partner. But, to come now to the point with which we are specially concerned, in that partnership, that very meeting of extremes, lay a problem, the great question of Christian civilization and its long history. With tradition and memory still recalling what had been and so suggesting what might be, what did this new world really mean? How could man, the progress of his life given such pause, his spirit set so aloof, recover the freedom of action he seemed to have lost and proceed once more on his way?

That Christendom was making just such inquiry is shown by its attitudes of faith and prayer, so much more tense and genuine than perhaps anything since known in history; by its sense of dependence and its construction of an other-worldly institution, the Church, from material supplied by this world; and by its expectation and its millennial prophecies. These things all show real and genuine inquiry and they show also how in the mere putting of the question, aided as this most certainly was by those memories from antiquity as well as by the prayers and prophecies and the institutional presentation of the spiritual world, there at once set in a movement to the question's answer. Checked in its old ways of living, deprived of its long-used instruments of law and order, the human spirit entered upon a long period of external observation and experiment on the one hand and

close and often cloistered self-analysis and self-discovery on the other; not unlike the observation and the self-study which we were able to remark in the only simpler case of the runner at the stream's bank. Nor do I need now to say that in the situation as it has been described we have the source of the medieval dualism. Taken as representing perhaps most characteristically the time of St. Augustine, although some might insist on an earlier time, that dualism was in its beginning but the setting of the great problem. Calling it a metaphysical dualism, we can mean only that the divorce of world and value, body and soul, was then very real indeed. No problem can ever be fairly stated without its "given this" and very decidedly that divorce was "given."

The problem, then, once set, the dualism taken as given, solution began. It would make too long a story to tell in detail the progress of the solution, narrating how gradually the human spirit and the natural world came once more to find themselves in each other. Yet I may touch on some of the marks of the progress. Christian doctrine made an important contribution in its rather early pronouncement of the equality, the equal substantiality, of the Son, representing God, the spiritual head of the Trinity, in human earthly form, with the heavenly Father (fourth century) or of the procedure of the Holy Spirit from the Son as well as from the Father (sixth century). Christian worship, coming to include the saints and the Virgin as well as the Father and the Son and to be as happily this-worldly and "idolatrous" in other ways, bowing reverently before images, for example, that were but forerunners of those great naturalizations of Christianity's spiritual values, the great works of Christian art, made its contribution. The rise of the state, first in the ninth century as the Holy Roman Empire and then as the independent nation with its own church in the sixteenth century, made its contribution; such a development being supported by a doctrine, in which Dante had some part, that very much as the Son was of equal substance with the Father so earthly rulers were as divinely authorized as spiritual rulers, God creating emperors and kings as well as popes. And, to cut this recital short, at the time, finally, when the medieval church doctrinally and institutionally had reached the very height of its organization, becoming the accepted machinery of all human activities so truly and fully that her officers were near to being only figureheads and often became—to put the fact mildly—irresponsible perhaps for being so unnecessary, at such a time Galileo and others revealed the possibility of the natural physical world being also a mechanism capable not exactly of doctrinal, logical, or legalistic, but still of mathematical guaranty. What a splendid outcome! What a splendid tribute to the hope and effort,

the prayers and the organization of the church was this: the natural world a great rational order, a great comprehensive mechanism; the church's régime of life and thought, of formal ritual and Latin, of marvelous institutional control, only finding justification and enlargement in the mechanical order and rationality of nature; her legalism and theologism only flowing out into the almost unbounded seas of modern reason! Such an outcome needed only that some one should complete the equation of the spiritual with the natural by discovering God in nature. But Giordano Bruno made just this discovery and others, some emotionally and some intellectually, soon came to the same view. As the church became organized, you see, nature was found lawful; and, nature thus showing reason, God's residence on earth was no longer confined to the church.

Small wonder that the medieval dualism, metaphysical and dogmatically theological, gave way and that psychophysical parallelism took its place. Life and its value, the world and its meaning might still appear different and apart, being still accounted as two worlds, but no longer could they be two opposed and independently existing substances. Was not their parallelism, and so their virtual unity, a realized fact? Church and state, their institutional representatives, if not in name and color, at least in form or shape, were about as like as the proverbial two peas. I do not know how many of my readers are accustomed to take the philosopher's "isms," as I am now asking that they be taken, as neither more nor less than reports of events in history, but I do know that too many regard philosophy as so abstract and generally impertinent to anything actual or interesting in human life that the philosophers seem to them least of all men to merit the term of reporters even as a term of abuse. Yet at least the psychologists, nowadays quite in the habit of associating thought with actual processes and events, may be counted on to be not as other men are in this matter. Philosophers, then, really are reporters; their philosophies reflect actual achievement, being as it were cross-sections at different points and angles in the course of history; in the form, however, of generalizations from actual experiences, of "isms," tendencies, or characteristic attitudes, rather than being certain individuals' immediate specific experiences. The psychologist's study of experience is formally different from the philosopher's or historian's, but, after all, only as individual and genus are different. This difference aside, however, when in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries certain philosophers, Descartes and others, formulated from several points of view the philosophy of parallelism they were only registering or reporting something that had become actual and factual enough in the life of Christendom to warrant publication, and the important news, when published, came to give great stimu-



lus to detailed elaboration of the general fact so reported, as any one knowing the history of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries can fully appreciate. The old controversies went on, apparently; spirit and matter still had their partisan advocates; but with the interest finally changed from that of determining the substance of things to that of determining the way of knowing things. Intuitionism, advocating introspection and ratiocination, and empiricism, advocating observation and experiment, were the lineal descendants of those medieval and metaphysical philosophies, realism, champion of the primary reality of the spiritual world of meanings and values, and nominalism, champion of the primary reality of the world of individual things, and the modern antagonists, for whom the knowledge of things was so much more important than the substance of things, only divided the labor of guiding men in their working out in its details the reported harmony of the spiritual and the material, of the inner values and the outer facts. For about three centuries, period of the great modern discoveries, which have been equally dependent on observation and reflection, on induction and deduction, on actual experiment and logic or mathematics, the human spirit has been busy working out the psychophysical parallelism first discovered in the seventeenth century, gradually deepening its understanding of itself, extending its knowledge of the world and ever enhancing the possibilities for action always latent, as so simply shown in the case of the runner's looking before leaping, in a psychophysical parallelism. When a civilization spends centuries before leaping, before making a great transition, on the one hand, examining itself and discovering and organizing all its minutest parts and powers, and, on the other hand, precisely and minutely studying the surrounding world, the transition so preparing must indeed be fraught with great consequences.

So, what after the parallelism? To what end the centuries of science, of cooperative introspection and observation, of human nature's most intimately associated self-analysis and measurement of the outer world? The formal dualism, on the whole, still remains, constituting, perhaps, as some at least might think, a still needed check, an influence against a too hasty leap. But in the light of events one may well wonder if positive and effective action, making kinetic what has been so long latent, should be longer delayed. Certainly, if the philosophical "isms" of the day, the pragmatic ideas and attitudes, for which dualism has quite lost its structural and metaphysical fixity, are any report of present tendencies and conditions, even the epistemological dualism must yield finally and give place to important progressive action. In fact, one may well ask, recognizing the great war and its possibilities, if the action so long preparing may not be already under way.

What has caused the great war? You would laugh—with me—if I should say that an epistemological psychophysical parallelism, although that might be blamed for most anything, had been the cause or at least a cause. The newspapers and the magazines, not to mention the grocery-store statesmen, have contributed many explanations and thereby enhanced greatly our enjoyment of life, and now a philosopher, outdoing them all with his fantastic suggestion, would only provide more gaiety for men and nations. And yet that epistemological psychophysical parallelism has hardly been innocent. What have we found this hyphenated “ism” to mean but at least a formal separation of meaning and thing, the values of life and the real activities of life? This being its meaning, you know as well as I that there can not, after all, be the form of anything without some survival of the substance. I have always suspected, for example, that there really was some Cheshire cat behind that historic grin. No epistemology can escape altogether the metaphysics that has preceded and made it possible. In spite, then, of the centuries and all that they have brought, our Christian civilization still suffers from a fixed and structural dualism, even from the dualism of spirit and matter with which the great problem of Christendom was first set in those days of St. Augustine, and, I now add, suffering needlessly. Yet so much suffering seems needless. Why suffer from the conditions of a problem when you have, at least sufficiently to warrant some confidence of adventure and experiment, the solution at last worked out? Why stand longer on the bank? Why let mere inertia give pause to at last possible action? Surely it is Christendom’s failure, when the opportunity had developed, to bring human values and actual life together that made the war possible, perhaps I ought to say that made the war necessary. Inertia is often such a hard thing to overcome. Without the war the great issue, calling for progressive action, for creative conduct on the part of civilization, for movement of the ideal in the real, in place of their long-standing *vis-à-vis*, might never have been forced. If so, the war will have been worth while, hard as it is to consent to the fearful cost.

You do not follow me? Then, once more, observe how, thanks to the inertia or the conservatism pretty much the Christian world over, in the institutional life of the peoples the divorce of life’s human values from life’s effective activities has persisted quite beyond need or reason, most conspicuously, I suppose, in Germany, but also in some noticeable and inhibiting degree in all countries. Moral sentiment and spirituality have been ecclesiastical, but moral effectiveness has been largely unofficial and non-ecclesiastical. Culture and general intelligence have been cloistered and academic, but on the whole vocational and professional skill have

been non-academic or at least not respectably academic. Patriotism has been narrowly and traditionally nationalistic, often even jingoistic, but productive national life in every phase of its activity from art and science even to athletics has been internationalistic. In short, generally, life's values have been kept aloof and institutional and have been in so far other-worldly and impractical, while life's real work, hard and "practical" and in these days amazingly productive, has been extra-mural and so unspiritualized. Wherefore there simply had to be war, always an easy consequence of such divorce; or progress, possible through a vital union; or both war and progress, the former forcing the issue of the latter.

Have you now caught my meaning? Have I, too, told the whole story of the medieval metaphysical dualism, the modern epistemological psychophysical parallelism and the present pragmatism clearly? Psychophysical parallelism has had the title rôle, I suppose, because it particularly seems to have had the interest of the psychologists. It has, also, been more or less of a rogue in recent times. But may I not hope that, among other desired possibilities, I have touched with new psychological interest some of the other "isms" of philosophy besides parallelism and also that to some profit I have suggested how a philosopher's story may have its value alike to history and to morals? What our day needs perhaps more than anything else is, if I may use the word culture to cover all positive human values, not culture and efficiency, but an effective culture.

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### PROFESSOR URBAN'S VALUE-THEORY

THE following critical notes refer to the articles<sup>1</sup> published recently in this JOURNAL by Professor Wilbur M. Urban.

1. *Value not an Objective*.—Professor Urban maintains in these articles the thesis that value is an "objective." This thesis is the most important new thing contained in the articles. I do not say it is the most important thing contained in them, for that seems to me to be the sharp distinction drawn between "being," on the one side, and "validity," on the other, together with the consequence that value does not have being of any kind, but has validity. But this distinction is not new; it originates with, or at least has been mainly developed by, Heinrich Rickert. It is an idea with which I can

<sup>1</sup> "Value and Existence," this JOURNAL, Vol. XIII., pp. 449-65; "Knowledge of Value and the Value-Judgment," this JOURNAL, Vol. XIII., pp. 673-87; "Ontological Problems of Value," this JOURNAL, Vol. XIV., pp. 309-27.